



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Social Services

2405 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2405
Courier 56-20-25 Fax 919-715-0023

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal, Director
(919) 733-3055

March 1, 2002

Dear County Director of Social Services:

Attention: Adult Services Supervisors

Subject: Strengthening North Carolina's Adult Protective Services Program

We are very pleased and excited to tell you about a new initiative we have been working on to strengthen our Adult Protective Services program at the State and local level. We have reviewed this new initiative with the Adult Services Committee of the NC Association of County Directors of Social Services, and have their enthusiastic support and commitment to move ahead with the project.

To begin work on this project, our Adult Programs Representatives (APRs) and APS program staff in the central office identified a number of primary goals we think are important for a quality APS program in North Carolina. We believe these goals, as well as other goals we may want to add as our project gets underway, will help guide us to achieve greater excellence in Adult Protective Services.

The goals listed below are related to our core mission to protect elderly and disabled adults in our state and to ensure basic needs are met while respecting individual rights. The goals are as follows:

- Strengthen the consistency in APS service delivery across all 100 DSSs;
- Develop APS standards that go beyond current policies and procedures, including staffing and work load standards;
- Expand the Division's training for county APS staff to include a comprehensive program of basic, intermediate, and advanced curricula;
- Develop a Quality Assurance System to ensure quality and accountability;
- Encourage improved interagency cooperation in APS; and
- Seek legislative support/action to strengthen APS, including necessary funding to implement the above goals.

To begin the process of meeting these goals, we plan to conduct a needs assessment of APS programs in a sample of county DSSs. The needs assessment will be carried out by the APRs in approximately 30 counties during the months of March-May 2002. The needs assessment will allow us to gather statistical and programmatic information in order to have baseline information

about our county APS programs. This information will help us to assess what our strengths are and to determine where there is room for improvement.

Dear County Director
Re: Strengthening APS
March 1, 2002
Page 2

The selected DSSs are being invited to participate, but are under no obligation to do so. The needs assessment is not monitoring, and there will be no identifying information associated with the data that is collected. There will, however, be an entrance and exit conference so that each DSS will understand and have copies of the data gathered about their APS program. The APRs are selecting the DSSs so there will be balanced representation of both large and small and urban and rural counties participating in the needs assessment. The selected DSSs will receive separately from this letter additional instructions and copies of the tools to be used to conduct the needs assessment.

Once the needs assessment is completed and the data is compiled, we plan to establish a work group with county DSS representation. The work group will convene in July 2002, and likely will meet for an extended period of time. The DSS participants will work together with our staff to develop the APS standards, the expanded training program, the quality assurance system, and other products we will need to meet our goals and strengthen our APS program. The data from the APS needs assessment will guide the work of this group. One of the first issues the work group will address is to review the goals we have established to make sure these are the correct goals to achieve our desired outcome of better protecting vulnerable citizens in our state. The work group will also help our staff finalize an overall time frame for meeting the goals and developing the products. Closer to the time of the first work group meeting, we will ask you for suggestions for county staff to participate on the work group.

We are excited about beginning this important work in partnership with you and believe together we can strengthen NC's Adult Protective Services program. If you have questions, or need additional information, please contact your Adult Programs Representative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John T. Tanner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being more prominent.

John T. Tanner, Chief
Adult and Family Services Section

JTT:spm

AFS-03-2002